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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the sixty-seventh session

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative

Letter dated 31 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative" in the agenda of the sixty-seventh session.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum in support of the above-mentioned request (annex I) and the relevant draft resolution (annex II) are also attached.

I have the honour to further request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Yúriy **Sergeyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Observer status in the General Assembly

1. The Central European Initiative (CEI) was granted observer status by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/111 of 9 December 2011.

Cooperation between the Central European Initiative and other major international organizations and institutions

2. The Initiative endeavours to cooperate with all major international organizations and institutions. It cooperates with the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations, in particular the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as with international financial institutions, especially the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It also cooperates with the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other regional cooperation initiatives on areas of mutual interest.

Relations with the United Nations

3. The Initiative cooperates with a number of United Nations specialized entities, namely the Economic Commission for Europe in the area of enterprise development, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in the area of science and technology.

Economic Commission for Europe

4. The Initiative's cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe, which dates back to 1998 when a memorandum of understanding was signed, should be underlined. The cooperation, especially in the field of small- and medium-sized enterprises, resulted in the publication of *Through the Looking Glass 2000-2001: A Handbook for Investors in CEI Regions*, which was presented for the first time on the occasion of the Summit Economic Forum in 2000. The Commission and the Initiative continued their cooperation during the following two years, when *Investiguide 2001-2002: Project Opportunities and Contacts for the CEI Region* and *Investiguide 2002-2003* were published. From 1999 to 2003, annual meetings on cooperation between the two bodies were held in Geneva, back to back with a meeting of the Committee of National Coordinators, with the aim of analysing areas of common support and identifying common projects and activities. In the following years, the Initiative was able to better focus its areas of activity, including with respect to its cooperation with the various international and regional organizations. Recent efforts have been made to relaunch cooperation with the Commission within the framework of the existing memorandum of understanding.

United Nations Environment Programme

5. Cooperation between the Initiative and UNEP is structured by means of a memorandum of understanding between the Initiative and the UNEP Vienna office/Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, signed in Kyiv on 13 December 2006, on the occasion of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention. The Initiative and UNEP Vienna had been cooperating on the European Union-funded Carpathian Project, aimed at enhancing the protection and sustainable development of the exceptional natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathian region. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding, special attention is paid to such issues of mutual concern as environmental protection, infrastructure, agriculture and tourism. The Initiative actively participates in events and meetings organized within the framework of the Carpathian Convention, and especially the Conferences of the Parties. At the project level, the Initiative supports seminars and workshops organized in cooperation with UNEP.

World Tourism Organization

6. UNWTO is a key partner in the promotion of international cooperation on tourism, tourism being an important sector for the economic development of the countries in the Initiative region. UNWTO representatives participate in the Initiative's high-level meetings and ministerial meetings on tourism. At the same time, the Initiative takes part in the UNWTO Commission for Europe meetings. The Initiative and UNWTO jointly support numerous projects, meetings and events in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and UNWTO experts often provide their expertise at the Initiative's seminars and conferences.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

7. The Initiative also enjoys fruitful cooperation with FAO, primarily at the project level. The Initiative's main counterpart at FAO is the Technical Cooperation Department and its Investment Centre division. Through its trust fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Initiative has financed several technical cooperation projects carried out by FAO experts in Central and Eastern Europe. The most successful projects included support for the development of fresh produce wholesale terminals and the establishment of the Initiative's Wholesale Markets Foundation and the EastAgri network, a platform of financial institutions investing in agribusiness and agriculture in the Initiative region and beyond. Ongoing collaboration includes smaller-scale projects aimed at transferring specific know-how in the area of agriculture from European Union to non-European Union States members of the Initiative.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

8. The Initiative maintains an office at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development which is responsible for the management of the Initiative trust fund and is entirely funded by the Government of Italy. It is located within the Operational Policies department of the Bank. Through this office, the Initiative has managed to build a special comparative advantage vis-à-vis other funds active within the Bank. The cooperation also grants the Initiative higher visibility and allows it to develop better coordination and successful partnerships.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

9. Cooperation with OECD dates back to 2002. Both OECD and the Initiative have benefited throughout the years from their mutual cooperation in terms of the increased impact and effectiveness of their respective programmes and the faster attainment of their common objectives, specifically in the areas of the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises, cross-border cooperation and local development. The results of that cooperation have been presented at several political and economic Initiative Summit meetings.

Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

10. In the area of institution-building and human resource development (culture, education, minorities, combating organized crime and cross-border cooperation), the Initiative has found strong partners with expert knowledge in a number of specialized organizations such as the Council of Europe and OSCE. Its cooperation with the Council has been strengthened even further in the last few years. The possibility of initiating project-oriented cooperation that could enhance the respective assets and efforts, especially in relation to certain geographical areas and sectors of activity of common interest, has been thoroughly examined. An exchange of information on relevant programmes and activities has resulted in several concrete cooperation proposals.

11. In addition to the organizations mentioned above, the Initiative also works in close cooperation with several regional organizations and forums operating within and beyond the Initiative region: the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Regional Cooperation Council and the South-East European Cooperation Process.

Regional Cooperation Council

12. Cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council dates back to 2008, when the Council was established. The initial contacts were undertaken on the occasion of a coordination meeting organized by the Council on 31 March 2008. Throughout the years, coordination meetings have provided an excellent opportunity for establishing contacts at the bilateral and trilateral levels. Cooperation with the Council was further strengthened through a memorandum of understanding signed on 12 May 2009 in Sarajevo. The highlight of the cooperation is the Sustainable Energy Development Regional Initiative, the first joint project between the Initiative and the Council. The Sustainable Energy Development Regional Initiative represents a concrete coordination effort by the two organizations to launch joint actions in the area of sustainable energy development by combining their complementary approaches in order to maximize the benefits for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

13. Cooperation with the Organization dates back to 1997 and was enhanced when a memorandum of understanding was signed in Istanbul, Turkey, on 7 March 2011. The initial steps towards the memorandum were taken during a number of ad hoc consultations between these two oldest and most experienced regional forums. A number of areas of collaboration were identified, including the environment, energy, transport, agriculture and science and technology. The memorandum is expected to

provide a general framework for the coordination of the activities of the two organizations on a regular basis and for strengthening their relations, with the aim of enhancing cooperation and synergizing efforts regarding issues of common interest. It is also a guarantee that duplication will be avoided.

Adriatic and Ionian Initiative

14. To date, cooperation with the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative has mainly focused on education in the context of the Central European Initiative's University Network and UniAdrion (a university network within the framework of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative). Nevertheless, a number of initiatives and activities in other areas have been undertaken by the two organizations, including mutual participation in high-level and expert meetings.

Reasons for including a sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative" under the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations"

15. The reasons for including a sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative" in the agenda of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly are listed below.

16. The Central European Initiative is the oldest and largest forum for regional cooperation in Europe (18 member States) and includes a territory of approximately 2.4 million km^2 and a population of more than 250 million. It was initially established to give a clear sign that the blocs that had existed in Europe for so long were being overcome through, inter alia, the re-establishment of cooperation links in a subregional context among countries of different political orientation. Throughout its existence, the Initiative has worked hard to establish cohesion and solidarity among its member States. In fact, it has undergone a transformation from being predominantly oriented towards policy dialogue to emphasizing the transfer of know-how and technology and promoting climate and energy sustainability and civil society, especially in the fields of scientific research, education, culture and media.

17. The building of symbolic and actual bridges across the former (or still existing) dividing lines of Europe can benefit the "underprivileged countries" only if it is accompanied by jobs creation, the strengthening of social and economic systems and an increased focus on the perspective of young people. In that context, the Initiative is seeking out and closely cooperating with all global, European and regional actors. The final aim is to achieve a concrete, positive impact on the lives of the people.

18. The Initiative tries to do its part by using the structures developed in its almost 23 years of existence, its position within the Governments of the 18 member States and its own funds to develop and co-finance concrete projects in its member countries. The range of opportunities is an important advantage which, if combined with the experience and resources of other international organizations, can have an even stronger impact.

19. A number of the Initiative's priorities are in line with the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those linked to universal education, gender equality, environmental sustainability and global partnership. The Initiative's activities in those fields include the following:

(a) *Universal education*. The Initiative's cooperation in the field of human resource development and education is focused on activities aimed at promoting employability through education and training, on the concept of lifelong learning and its implementation and on education through the further development of its University Network. These issues are of particular importance today. In this context, the Initiative contributes by identifying means and methods of integrating specific "sensitive" groups (children, women, underqualified people, high school graduates, the long-term unemployed, immigrants, the disabled) into the labour market through education and training. The development of successful approaches (methods, programmes, initiatives and projects) to enhance the education of children and adults through the exchange of experiences and good practices is among the Initiative's priorities;

(b) *Gender equality*. The Initiative supports the promotion of women in all areas of society. It has always aimed to better understand women entrepreneurship in its member countries by analysing the importance of social innovation as part of the entrepreneurial process and to propose concrete recommendations to support socially innovative programmes and policies for women entrepreneurs. It has supported a number of programmes and projects to that end;

(c) *Environmental sustainability*. The Initiative is in tune with such major global issues as climate change, environmental protection, increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. In that context, all actors ought to find win-win solutions. The Initiative also recognizes the importance of both energy and environmental protection as an essential element for sustainable development. It enhances cooperation in those fields among its member countries, thus contributing to global energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. It does that by providing a framework for consultations and the sharing of knowledge about strategies and policies among its member States and for the implementation of activities and projects;

(d) *Global partnership*. The successful implementation of the Initiative's goals and objectives depends to a large degree on the partnership it has established with the United Nations and all other international organizations and international financial institutions, as well as with the Governments, other institutions and civil society organizations of its member States. Those partnerships continue to be further developed and strengthened. The Initiative and its partners will continue to help to deliver development programmes and projects to those who have the greatest need for accelerated economic development or recovery, which is one of the Initiative's strategic goals.

20. Through its various funds and instruments of cooperation, the Initiative has financed and supported projects on a number of other issues that are in line with the Millennium Development Goals, such as combating poverty, and improving child and maternal health.

Conclusions

21. At the working meeting of the Initiative under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, held in New York on 24 May 2012, the representatives of the member States of the Initiative expressed their support for requesting the inclusion of a sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative"

under the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations", as well as the adoption of a resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative", thus further strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Initiative.

22. The Initiative intends to maintain its current momentum and to intensify its communication and collaborative action with the United Nations on issues of common interest.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 66/111 of 9 December 2011, by which it granted observer status to the Central European Initiative,

Recalling also the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage activities through regional cooperation to promote the goals and objectives of the United Nations,

Convinced that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Appreciating the efforts of the Central European Initiative to strengthen its relations with the United Nations system and with relevant international and regional organizations for the development and implementation of projects and programmes in all priority areas,

1. *Welcomes* the political dialogue encouraged by the Central European Initiative, providing its member States with a flexible and pragmatic platform for regional cooperation on topical issues;

2. *Takes note* of the activities of the Central European Initiative aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in such fields as environment, transport, energy with a particular focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, tourism, culture, education and media, as well as other activities in the cultural, economic and scientific fields;

3. *Also takes note* of the efforts of the Central European Initiative to support, elaborate and realize joint regional projects in strategic areas, in particular in the fields of transport, environment and energy;

4. *Welcomes*, in this context, the fruitful cooperation between the Central European Initiative and the European Union, as one of the main co-funders of such projects, and supports the efforts of the Central European Initiative to take concrete steps for the establishment of other mutual beneficial partnerships with the Union;

5. *Also welcomes* the financing of projects by the Central European Initiative Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which provides mainly grant-type assistance for specific components of technical cooperation projects, linked to large operations of the Bank in Central European Initiative member States not part of the European Union, in a number of areas, including agriculture, transport, energy, assistance to small- and medium-sized enterprises, municipal infrastructure and services, banking, insurance and institution-building and capacity-building;

6. *Appeals* for greater cooperation between the Central European Initiative and international organizations and international financial institutions in co-financing important projects in the region;

7. *Welcomes* the cooperation established between the Central European Initiative and other regional organizations and initiatives;

8. *Takes note* of the active role of the Central European Initiative in the field of culture and media by supporting numerous events and initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity, media pluralism and media transparency and independence;

9. *Also takes note* of the active support of the Central European Initiative for the mobility of students and researchers through various instruments and programmes;

10. *Acknowledges* the commitment of the Central European Initiative to contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals at the regional and global levels;

11. *Takes note* of the cooperation between the Central European Initiative and the Economic Commission for Europe in the area of enterprise development, with the United Nations Environment Programme in the area of environment, with the World Tourism Organization in the area of tourism, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the area of agriculture, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the area of culture and with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in the area of science and technology;

12. *Also takes note* of the enhanced cooperation between the Central European Initiative and the Economic Commission for Europe, within the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed in 1998, through the more recent participation by the Central European Initiative in activities of the Commission in Geneva;

13. *Welcomes* the cooperation established with the International Telecommunication Union in the field of distant participation in meetings and, more specifically, e-diplomacy;

14. *Invites* the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Central European Initiative in order to continue joint activities for the achievement of common objectives;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-ninth session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative".